IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 9 and 13, amend claims 8 and 12, and add new claim 17, as shown below in the detailed listing of all claims which are, or were, in the application:

Claims 1-7 (Canceled)

8. (Currently amended) A composition for controlled release of a biologically active agent from a carrier, said composition consisting essentially of a biologically active agent which is heparin or a related biologically active acidic polysaccharide, and a carrier which is a sol-gel derived silica xerogel, wherein the xerogel is derived from ~~a tetraalkoxysilane~~ tetraethoxysilane and part of the ~~tetraalkoxysilane, up to 25 mol-%,~~ tetraethoxysilane is replaced by an alkylsubstituted alkoxysilane, and wherein said composition is biodegradable.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 8, wherein said alkylsubstituted alkoxysilane is a member selected from the

group consisting of methyltriethoxysilane (METES), dimethyldiethoxysilane (DMDES) and ethyltriethoxysilane (ETES).

11. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 8, wherein said biologically active agent is heparin and which is present in an amount of 5 to 30 weight percent, calculated on the air dried xerogel.

12. (Currently amended) A method for the preparation of a composition for controlled release of a biologically active agent from a carrier, said method consisting essentially of

a) hydrolysing an alkoxysilane and an alkyl substituted alkoxysilane in the presence of a catalyst,

b) optionally adjusting the pH to a value suitable for the biologically active agent,

c) adding the biologically active agent,

d) allowing the hydroxysilane to polymerize, and optionally

e) removing water and alcohol formed in the hydrolyzation from the mixture, wherein said composition consists essentially of a biologically active agent which is heparin or a related biologically active acidic polysaccharide, and a carrier which is

a sol-gel derived silica xerogel, wherein the xerogel is derived from ~~a tetraalkoxysilane~~ tetraethoxysilane and part of the ~~tetraalkoxysilane~~ tetraethoxysilane is replaced by an alkylsubstituted alkoxysilane, and wherein said composition is biodegradable.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously presented) The method of claim 12, wherein said alkylsubstituted alkoxysilane is at least one member of the group consisting of methyltriethoxysilane (METES), dimethyldiethoxysilane (DMDES) and ethyltriethoxysilane (ETES).

16. (Previously presented) The method of claim 12, wherein nitric acid or acetic acid is used as a catalyst.

17. (New) The composition of claim 8, wherein said alkylsubstituted alkoxysilane is present in said xerogel in an amount effective to increase a release rate of said biologically active agent from said xerogel in comparison to a xerogel prepared from tetraethoxysilane only.